
Regional Council Activity Report

October 3, 2001

Briefing to Member Agencies from Executive Director James M. Bourey



Executive Director's Report

Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, "The reward of a thing well done is to have done it."

The Maricopa Association of Governments should thus feel quite rewarded in the wake of the recent Western States Intermodal Planning Group (IPG) 2001 Annual Conference. MAG hosted the conference September 30 – October 2 at the Doubletree Guest Suites in Phoenix.

Transportation planning experts from around the Western United States joined MAG to focus on a variety of regional transportation issues, especially those commonly affecting Western states. The theme of the two-and-a-half day conference was "Diversity in the 21st Century and the Challenge to Transportation." A special invitation was issued to Native American communities to encourage their attendance and participation in the conference.

Keynote speakers included Linnea Bernard McCord, an associate professor of business law from Pepperdine University. McCord, who has served as legal counsel for a number of multinational companies, addressed issues of the global economy in the Western United States, specifically focusing on issues of diversity.

The conference represented a significant opportunity for transportation planners to share concerns, ideas and solutions for improving our transportation systems. The jam-packed agenda for the two-and-a-half day conference featured more than a dozen sessions, including an overview of what's happening in transportation in the Western United States; regional governance in terms of how growth, trade, the new economy and changing demographics are causing many regions to rethink their organizational structure; and how to integrate multi-modal projects into transportation plans. Special sessions were also held to examine issues of airspace congestion, as well as how to utilize videoconferencing to reduce trips and improve air quality.

MAG received numerous compliments about the usefulness of the conference, the quality of the presentations, and the professionalism of our organization. Bob O'Loughlin, chairman of the IPG and urban transportation planner for the Federal Highway Administration, said the MAG conference will serve as a new standard for the IPG, and that he wants several session topics to be standard fare at future conferences. It is always gratifying to know that we are regarded so highly by our peers, and my thanks go out to the MAG staff for making this event an outstanding success. But more than that, we are grateful to know that those attending the conference walked away with some great insights on how we can better serve our transportation constituencies.



Regional Council Meeting Report for Wednesday, October 3, 2001

Members Briefed on Governance Task Force Activities

Regional Council members received a briefing on the progress of the MAG Governance Task Force. The Task Force and its Advisory Committee have each had about nine meetings, two of which were joint meetings. The Task Force has been charged with studying the roles and responsibilities of MAG, the geographic extent of the region, appropriate MAG membership, organizational and voting structures, and the name of the organization.

In their joint meeting, the Task Force and Advisory Committee identified four major issues to be examined, including issues of accountability; the need for additional connection of land use decisions to the availability of adequate regional public facilities; the need for integration of all modes of transportation with funding, planning and operations; and the need for improved communication between regions. The Task Force is scheduled to meet again on October 10 to review and modify alternatives to address each task. There will be a joint meeting with the Advisory Committee on October 22 to receive input on alternatives, followed by a meeting November 1 to develop recommendations for Regional Council consideration.

For more information contact James M. Bourey, Executive Director, (602) 254-6300.

Council Approves West Valley Trail Plan

The MAG Regional Council has approved a master plan to implement a 42-mile trail network for pedestrians, equestrians, bicyclists and other non-motorized trail users. The West Valley Multi-Modal Transportation Corridor Plan will connect residents along the Agua Fria River to schools, parks, employment,

recreation areas, open space, and canals – all the way from New River south to Avondale.

For the past year or so, MAG has been working with several West Valley communities and the Flood Control District of Maricopa County to create a regional planning framework for the trail system.

The Plan was developed with funds provided through the Arizona Department of Transportation Enhancement Funds Program. Design of the trails was conducted with extensive input from the public, including a two-day workshop in which future trail users were able to review and make suggestions and improvements to the plan. Designs were linked to different landscape characteristics along the Corridor.

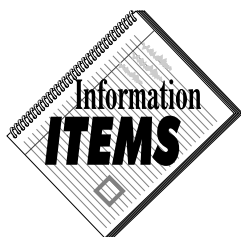
For more information contact Dawn Coomer, Multi-Modal Program Manager, (602) 254-6300.

Elderly Mobility Recommendations Approved

The MAG Regional Council has approved a plan to help older drivers get around in the future. The plan was developed by the MAG Elderly Mobility Working Group and contains 25 draft recommendations for improving mobility for seniors. The Regional Action Plan on Aging & Mobility focuses on four key areas: infrastructure and land use improvements; alternative transportation modes; older driver competency; and education and training.

The recommendations focus on a central theme – to keep seniors mobile as long as possible through enhancing driver capabilities, street and highway improvements, and transportation options. Education can also play a key role in helping seniors assess their capabilities and to learn about options that are available to them. Suggestions range from mileage reimbursement programs and flexible bus routes, to locating services close to where seniors live. Recommendations include improving streets and highways to accommodate senior travelers – including larger signage, lighted crosswalks, audible signals, pedestrian refuge areas, and turn islands.

Information Items



MAG Provides Domestic Violence Resource to Faith Communities

Often, the first place a domestic violence victim turns is to her faith leader. To help faith communities respond to domestic violence within their congregations,

the MAG Domestic Violence Council has developed a special reference guide with tips on how to best support those who may be experiencing family violence. The "Domestic Violence Resource Guide for Faith Leaders" encourages religious leaders to recognize the signs of abuse, outlines ways faith communities can respond, and provides information on how to access available resources. The guide will be distributed during the Fourth Annual Religious Response to Domestic Violence, a conference for the interfaith religious community, which will be held Tuesday, October 16 from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Paradise Valley United Methodist Church.

For more information contact Mary Thomson or Kristina Rivera, (602) 254-6300.



Upcoming Events

Fair Shot for MAG

The Maricopa Association of Governments will join the Arizona Department of Transportation at a booth during Safety Days at the Arizona State Fair on Saturday, October 20. Thousands of children are expected to visit the booth as part of a "passport" program that allows them to get a free Governor's Office of Highway Safety beanie bear, if they get stamps from all of the booths. MAG will distribute domestic violence safety information, as well as information about the Freeway Service Patrol and other transportation programs.

For more information contact Jason Stephens, Public Involvement Planner, (602) 254-6300.

Next Regional Council Meeting

The next Regional Council meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 7, 2001 at 5:00 p.m. at the MAG offices, 302 N. 1st Ave., Suite 200. Agenda items are expected to include a summary of the FY 2002 MAG Early Phase Public Input Opportunity Report, a recommendation for a prioritized list of proposed PM-10 certified street sweeper projects for FY 2002 CMAQ funding, and consultant approval to develop the High Capacity Transit Plan. Additional agenda items are pending.

For more information contact Dennis Smith, MAG Assistant Director, (602) 254-6300.